

times when you must remind your client of the project schedule, the contractually obligated scope of work, and the budget. These project parameters can help focus the work and establish expectations. Argue for what you believe will make the project its most successful, and be certain that you have addressed any project needs not presented by your client. It is wonderful when you can follow their lead, but be ready to push the boundaries of what is artistically possible - after all, that is why they selected you!

The public art design **process is iterative**. No doubt you may also work this way in your studio, but your client will expect you to share these ideas and be integral to your decision-making. You will be asked to listen to their suggestions and consider them to be a collaborator. Your responsibility is to first understand their perspective on the project and then create an artistic response that absorbs their ideas but has not been literally influenced by these predispositions. Throughout the project, your client will be trying to satisfy not only aesthetic pleasure but also recognize the multiple constituencies or voices that have an interest in the project. You may present your conceptual ideas to a public arts board, a municipal agency or department, residents of a neighborhood, and elected officials, each of which may have a contrary opinion about the proposed work.

As you learn about the history of the project and your client, and in turn develop responses to the project site and create design recommendations, this protracted conversation will be deliberate and help refine the project. As you develop the work you are also helping your client comprehend both *how* a work of art is made and *why* the work was commissioned. This process begins at the first project meeting and may not conclude until installation because public art is a constantly shifting ground in which decisions may need to be revisited based on changing conditions. Public art commissions frequently take several years to complete once you have been selected. Throughout the life of the project, clients may change, budgets may change, site conditions may change, and, the scope of the project may change: these are dimensions of public art that demand flexibility and grace. When your client can serve as your advocate, and protect you and the integrity of the project itself during project reviews, then you have achieved a shared vision for the work.

Unlike how you may work in your studio, your client expects that you will be making measured and **consistent progress** on the commission until installation and dedication. Documentation of project development is important to satisfy this aspect of your working relationship. Notes from meetings, emails, written confirmation of project decisions (especially when made over the telephone) are all helpful in building reciprocal trust between you and your client.

You will also need to carefully **manage all funds** you receive for the commission and keep records of all expenditures; this will help you work within the project budget (chances are this is a fixed sum). Your strength as a project manager will show in your budgeting for each phase of the project, your proposed project schedule, and how you will work with other members of a client's design team or sub-consultants you have retained.

There are five primary phases of work with restrictive deadlines for each phase. Typically, the work flows sequentially from one phase to the next with a formal approval process that permits you to be paid. Generally, the phases of work are:

1. Background Research and Conceptual Design

- a) meet with project representatives; tour the site(s) and the community; learn about the project's goals and listen to multiple constituencies; review all relevant drawings.
- b) development of preliminary ideas for the work(s).